

For many students, summer break is a time to relax from learning, perhaps working a part-time job and relaxing with friends. However, for some Lakota high school students, it is the perfect opportunity to sharpen their professional skills while learning the inside scoop about careers of interest to them.

These experiences, where students intern at actual workplaces in the community, are one of the best ways for young people to find out what they're passionate about. These placements are robust, with rotations chock full of experiential learning opportunities.

I'm pleased to see how popular the internships are with our juniors and seniors. Over spring break, 45 students participated in an internship session and an additional 56 students will be doing so over the summer.

Regardless of which company our students are placed with, these opportunities provide real world experiences that help develop the next generation of professionals. Following this experience, we know our students are in a better position to take the next step in their college and career planning.

Thanks to our partners, there is a wide range of placement offerings in government, non-profit, business and medical arenas. And, Lakota's internship programs continue expanding. We currently have 19 partners in the high-demand industries of biomedical/health, engineering and design, information technology, marketing research, financial services, communication and business operations. Our current internship partners include:

- Business Career Partners: Emery Federal Credit Union; First Financial Bank; Prosource; SanMar Corporation; Valley Central Bank; WMKV Radio; Various Views Research
- Engineering Career Partners: Procter & Gamble; Kinetic Vision; Ethicon
- Medical Career Partners: West Chester Hospital; Atrium Medical Center; ABC Pediatric Therapy; Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center; Beacon Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine; The Center for Foot Care and Podiatry
- Non-Profit Career Partners: Liberty Township; West Chester Township; Community First Solutions

Much of the learning that occurs during the internship is two-fold: the student receives real life experience in the workplace, obtaining direction and guidance from professionals in their field of interest. Students also learn about themselves, discerning what they are passionate about and making a strong connection between the classroom and their future career path.

It's all part of our focus on instructional excellence, as we offer career exploration with high achievement. One of Lakota's goals is to prepare all students for their future by getting them to be college-, career-, and innovation- ready and our internship placements offer students deeper, richer and more relevant learning experiences that complement the rigor available through academic courses. By building on learning such as Lakota's STEAM² (science,

technology, engineering, arts/design, mathematics and medical) academic program, our internships are preparing our students for their future while helping prepare a highly skilled workforce.

There are benefits, too, for the corporate partner as the internship placements often energizes current employees who serve as mentors, builds supervisory and motivational skills of employees and facilitates recruitment of qualified employees. The skills and insight gained during the internship benefit the student both now and in their future, as well as our community both in the immediate and long-term.

Robb Vogelmann is the acting superintendent for Lakota Local Schools. [Click here](#) for more on Lakota's internship offerings.